

Lake Vermilion Trail Steering Committee
Meeting #22 Notes
1/10/18 – USFS La Croix Ranger Station, Cook

Called to order at 10:00 AM

Attendees

John Bassing – *Greenwood Township*

Joan Broten – *Minnesota DNR*

Cathi Hiveley – *Beatty Township*

Holly Larson – *National Park Service (NPS)*

Steve Lotz – *Vermilion Lake Township*

Josh Gilson - *Lake Vermilion Resort Association (LVRA)*

Carol Booth - *Beatty Resident*

Greg Dostert – *Breitung Township*

Terri Joki-Martin – *City of Tower*

Tom Rukavina – *St. Louis County Commissioner*

1. Updates

- a. Carol Booth reported that a briefing had been scheduled for January 22 at 4:00 pm at Tim Johnson's State Farm office in Cook. Tom Bakk, Rob Ecklund, and Tom Rukavina have been invited to meet with Carol, Tim, and Tom Lantry. They plan to show the Trail power point and answer questions that the three office holders may have.

2. Administration

- a. Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)
 - i. Report on progress with the County – Tom Rukavina reported that the St. Louis County (SLC) attorney's office was recommending several changes to the JPA to minimize financial liability to SLC from the Trail; however the exact language was not yet available. He indicated that the SLC Committee of the Whole would take up the JPA and the County Attorney changes on January 23 at Virginia. If it would then be sent to the County Board with a recommendation for approval such approval should be routine at the SLC Board meeting on February 6 in Duluth. Holly Larson has requested a copy of the SLC changes as soon as they are available. Once she receives the changes she will forward them to the Bois Forte, Cook, Greenwood, and Tower representatives for their attorney's reviews.
 - ii. Once again it will be important to contact the SLC Commissioners asking for support. Carol Booth will again distribute a short bullet list type statement.
 - iii. In order to keep the process moving forward, once the Steering Committee members have a SLC approved version of the JPA following the SLC January 23 meeting this language should be put on agendas for

approval by the various entities at their respective February meetings with the assumption that this will be the final language approved by the SLC Board at their February 6 meeting

- b. Potential work group and board meeting dates – again in order to keep the process moving forward there will be a combined preliminary meeting of the Trail Steering Committee and the new Joint Powers Board on February 14 in Tower at the MN DNR building at 10:00 am.
3. Communication/Public Relations
 - a. Banner Update – Carol Booth and Char Conger are working on a banner design and hope to have it in a draft form soon.
 - b. Business Cards update – the 1,000 multi-color two sided business cards were available at the meeting and passed around. The final cost was \$71.79 for 1,000 cards.
 4. Fundraising
 - a. Donations – Terri Joki-Martin passed around an accounting for the trail fund through January 5. No recent donations were listed.
 - b. Grants
 - i. People for Bikes – Carol Booth is working on this with a January 19 deadline.
 - ii. IRRRB grant for grant writing – Carol is also working on this with some assistance from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC).
 - iii. Blandin – Josh Gilson is submitting a Letter of Interest through Blandin’s on-line inquiry application in the amount of \$49,000 to be used for easement acquisition, planning, and design work.
 - iv. Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) – Holly Larson reported that this grant has an involved application process with an environmental focus and an April 11 deadline.
 - v. Legacy grants – the next deadline is August.
 - vi. Federal Recreational Trail Program grants - these are administered through the MN DNR, have a maximum of \$150,000, and require a 25% match (cash or in-kind). The next deadline is February 28.
 - vii. Regional Trail Grant Program has a \$250,000 maximum is available with a March 31 deadline.
 - viii. It was decided not to try for the Federal or Regional trail grants due to the match required. Tentatively, the committee would like to try for an LCCMR grant for the segment near Tower this year, and a GMRP&TC “Legacy” grant, due in late summer, for the Beatty township segment.
 - ix. It was also noted that it will be helpful to begin tracking meeting time, grant work time, mileage, and other expenses to begin building a record where an in-kind match may be used with grants.
 - x. Nancy Larson, Tower, was mentioned as a possible contract grant writer.
 5. Trail Development

- a. West end subcommittee – the subcommittee met on 1-9 and has been working with land owners in the head-of-the-lake area. They are identifying a route from the Landing Restaurant working south along Vermilion Dr, possibly west along Sunset Blvd, then following a ridge & winding south to the Winnifred Road/Wakemup Hill area. The route would be between three and five miles and would cross private, State, and County administered tax forfeit land. There are a few additional land owners to contact.
 - b. East end subcommittee – Joan Broten presented the route at present, approximately a mile in length from the Tower Harbor area to the east junction of West Two Road with Highways 1 & 169. She and Steve Lotz met on December 21 with KGM at the KGM offices on Highway 53. KGM would prefer that the trail cross their parcel on the Highways 1 & 169 side rather than on the south side of the parcel and are willing to work with the Trail on this. Holly Larson has had preliminary conversation with MN DOT about trail crossings along Highways 1 & 169. The subcommittee would like to cross the highway in an area between the west junction with Pike Bay Drive and Angus Road (CR 77). If a crossing in this area would be acceptable with MN DOT and if easements can be obtained from several private owners a route south of the highway toward Tower across County administered tax forfeit land would be possible.
 - c. Carol Booth will check with Mark Ludlow for suggestions that might help the central segment in the Frazer Bay Landing area.
 - d. Grant applications - if just the one mile portion of the east route would be ready it could be packaged for a grant or grants with three to five mile west portion. If a four mile route from Tower to Angus Road (CR 77) can be assembled it is felt that applications for the two portions should be separate. The LCCMR grant has categories for connections and recreation for which one or both of the segments may be a good fit. Carol Booth and Barb Caskey of ARDC have done some preliminary work with the west segment for Legacy grant funding.
6. Master Plan – discussion items
- a. Holly Larson reported that Russell Habermann (ARDC) and Tom Holmes (NPS) did a large amount of work on the Trail’s Master Plan last year. Additional work is required. Discussion items in that regard are:
 - i. Public engagement – Holly recommended a facebook option for polls and/or survey monkey questions. The consensus was to do a survey. A list of questions will be prepared. Carol Booth, Cathi Hivley, and Steve Lotz will review the survey questions. Char Conger was volunteered to use social media to advertise the availability of the survey. Links to the survey should be on as many area web sites as possible. Suggestions included area Chambers of Commerce, NWFA, area schools, and Natural Harvest in Virginia.
 - ii. Draft segments of the plan should be available in a couple weeks.
 - iii. Public health values – a list of five values; promote physical activity, promote healthy life styles, connect people to the outdoors, embrace

mental health, and encourage social interaction, was provided and each individual present ranked the five from 1 (high) to 5 (low).

- iv. List of investments to date – a list of what has been invested in the process to date is needed. It was thought the Lake Vermilion Resort Association (LVRA) and the ARDC would be the best sources for this information.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 10 a.m. to Noon
at the MN DNR building, Tower**